



Department of Justice

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COURT OF APPEALS UPHOLDS DENATURALIZATION OF WISCONSIN MAN WHO HELPED CARRY OUT 1943 NAZI MASS MURDER OF JEWS

WASHINGTON, D.C. – A federal appeals court yesterday affirmed a lower court ruling revoking the U.S. citizenship of a Wisconsin man who, by his own admission, stood guard during a Nazi mass killing operation in occupied Poland in 1943, with orders to “shoot to kill” any still-living Jewish victim who attempted escape, announced Alice S. Fisher, Assistant Attorney General for the Criminal Division.

An opinion issued by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit, in Chicago, unanimously affirmed a May 2005 ruling by a federal district court in Milwaukee that revoked the naturalized U.S. citizenship of Josias Kumpf, 81, of Racine, Wis., because of his admitted wartime service as an armed SS guard at Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp. He served at an SS labor camp in Trawniki, Poland – where 8,000 Jewish men, women, and children were murdered in a single day as part of a two-day mass murder operation involving 42,000 victims at three camps; and at construction sites in France at which prisoners built launching platforms for Germany’s V-1 and V-2 missile attacks on England. The case was prosecuted in trial court by the Criminal Division’s Office of Special Investigations (OSI).

“Josias Kumpf stood guard in the course of a bloody slaughter during the Holocaust,” said Assistant Attorney General Fisher. “This decision serves as reminder that the victims of that massacre and their families are not and will not be forgotten.”

Kumpf was born in the former Yugoslavia, immigrated to this country in 1956 under a program intended to benefit post-war refugees in Europe, and became a U.S. citizen in 1964. The government’s case against him was filed in September 2003.

In the ruling, the Seventh Circuit quoted sworn testimony by Kumpf in which he described his duties as a guard during the Nov. 3, 1943 massacre at the SS labor camp at Trawniki. As Kumpf explained, he “was watching them shoot some people.” Some of the victims were “still halfway alive,” he acknowledged, and if someone attempted escape, his assignment was “shoot them to kill, shoot them to kill.”

The Court of Appeals emphasized that Kumpf “presided over and witnessed the torture and murder of helpless people.” As a result, the court concluded, Kumpf had “personally assisted” in persecution and was not eligible for a U.S. visa or naturalization as a U.S. citizen.

“The mass murders perpetrated by the Nazis at Trawniki and elsewhere could not have been carried out without the participation of men like Josias Kumpf,” said Eli M. Rosenbaum, director of OSI. “He has no legal right to remain in this country, and we intend to pursue his removal as expeditiously as possible.”

The case was litigated by OSI trial attorneys Stephen Paskey and Adam Fels; it was argued before the Court of Appeals by Paskey.

The case against Kumpf is a result of OSI’s ongoing efforts to identify, investigate and take legal action against former participants in Nazi persecution who reside in the United States. Since OSI began operations in 1979, it has won cases against 101 individuals who assisted in Nazi crimes of persecution. In addition, over 170 individuals who sought to enter the United States in recent years have been blocked from doing so as a result of OSI’s “Watch List” program, which is enforced in cooperation with the Department of Homeland Security.

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